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Protection of Heritage Resources

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Ozark-St. Francis
National Forests

Forest
Service



Southern
Region

United States Department of Agriculture

What are Heritage Resources?

Heritage resources are historical or archeological remains of past human activities. An old rock fence, an old grave or cemetery and arrowheads are examples.



What Laws Protect Heritage Resources?

Heritage resources are protected by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) and the National Environment Protection Act (NEPA).

NHPA and NEPA require that every Federal agency "take into account" how any proposed project could affect the historic properties of an area. It was also stated that the agency must give the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed project.

This means that the Forest Service must do a Heritage resource survey of any area where soil disturbance activities will take place, write up the findings and give the Advisory Council the report for comments before a final decision is made on the proposed project. To do this, the Forest Service has hired archeologists and heritage resource technicians.

How are Heritage Resources Located on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests?

Once an area is selected for a proposed project, such as a timber sale or wildlife work, the forest archeologist and heritage resource technicians enter the picture.

Aerial photographs taken in the 1930's are reviewed to locate homesites, barns or fields. Once those areas are identified on the photograph, they are located on a current map to be checked as possible historical sites.

Aerial photographs taken from 1936-1990 are checked for bluff lines or other areas where Native Americans may have lived and are identified on a current map to be checked as possible prehistoric sites.

With this and other information, heritage resource technicians go to the area where the proposed project is planned to check for possible historic and prehistoric sites. They begin by crossing the area in a somewhat grid-type pattern 82 to 328 feet apart, depending on the slope, taking shovel tests at specified intervals. Soil taken from the shovel tests is sifted through a wire screen to locate any objects made or used by man. Additional shovel tests are taken at any known home sites, barns, rock fences, etc. All sites, prehistoric and historic, located in the project area are recorded and locations are marked on maps.



What Becomes of Artifacts found in the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests?

Everything that is found is labeled, placed in plastic bags and kept. Once the survey of the area has been completed, a report of what was found and where it was found is written by a heritage resource technician and sent to an archeologist to be checked along with the item found. The archeologist will then visit each site found and write a report for the State historical preservation officer for review and comments.

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What Happens to a Project if a Heritage Resource Site is Found on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests?

The heritage resource technician will give the report to a review team that oversees the proposed project. Any site found will require the team to come up with a plan of action that will not disturb the site. In some cases this means identifying the site on the ground and making sure there is no soil disturbance in the area. This works well with small sites such as an old homesite, grave or bluff shelter. If the site is large, such as an area Native Americans used as a hunting camp or semi-permanent home, any proposed project will need to be either redesigned to protect the site or cancelled.



After the field work, reports and action by the review team, the end result will be a proposed action that will take place with no disturbance to the heritage resources.



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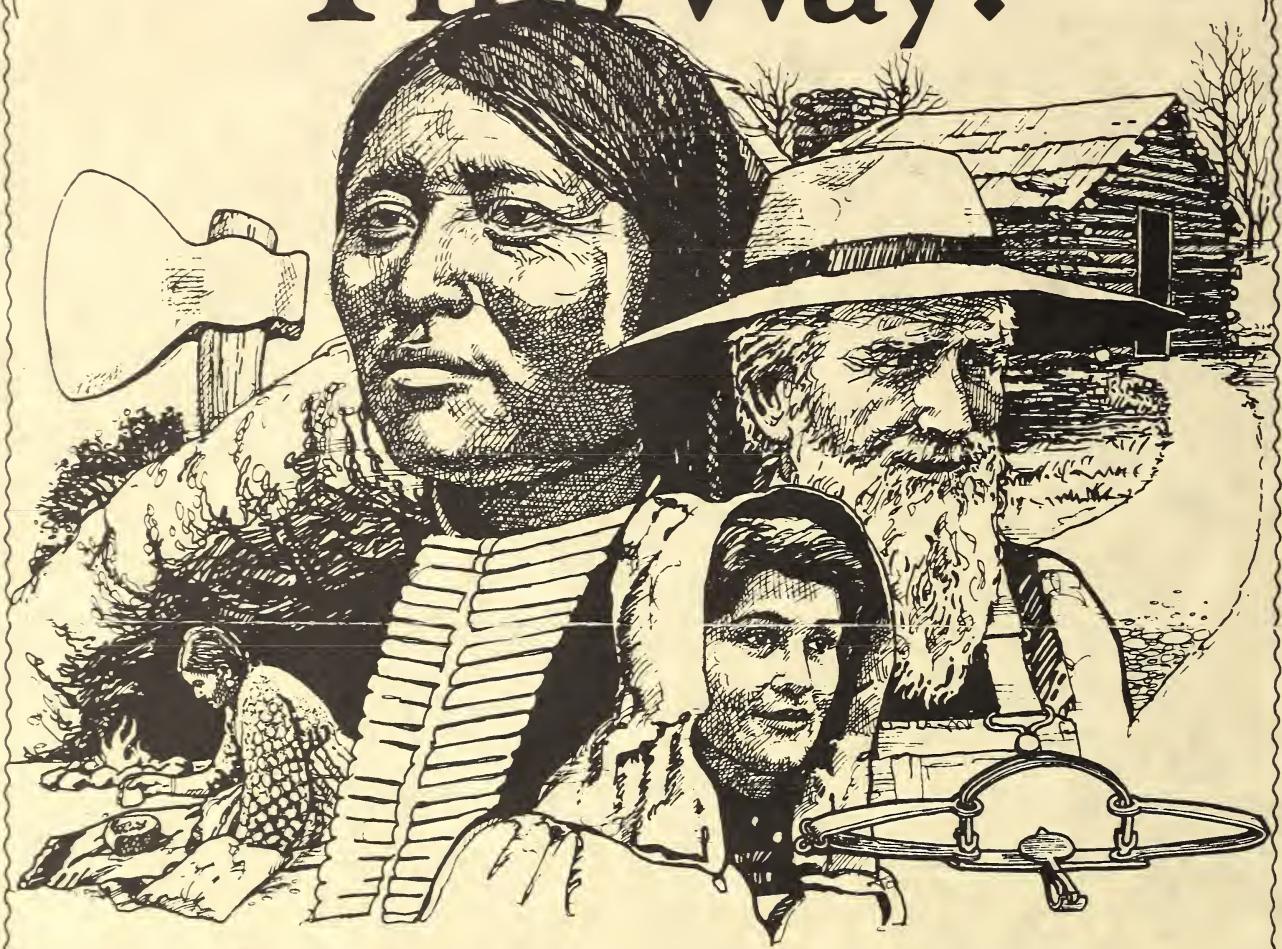
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Who Passed This Way?



Please Don't Erase The
Traces of America's Past

Archeological and historic sites hold clues to America's past. If disturbed, a part of our heritage may be lost forever.

Sites and artifacts on public lands are protected by Federal law. If you discover such remains, please leave them undisturbed. Report your discoveries to Forest Service personnel.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE—FOREST SERVICE



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